

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-13 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 /081 W

-----111020Z 002382 /11

R 110815Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7994

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 0669

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH

SUBJECT: CINCPAC'S MEETING WITH THAI FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT

PACHARIYANKUN

1. AT 1130 TODAY, JANUARY 10, ADMIRAL WEISNER PAID A COURTESY CALL ON THAILAND'S FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT PACHARIYANKUN. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM BURKE. SUBSEQUENT TO THEIR MEETING THE FOREIGN MINISTER HOSTED A LUCHEON IN THE ADMIRAL'S HONOR WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADVISORY COUNCIL; ADMIRAL AMON SIRIKAYA, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ROYAL THAI NAVY; AND SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE THAI FOREIGN MINISTRY.

2. DURING ADMIRAL WEISNER'S COURTESY CALL THE CONVERSATION COVERED A VARIETY OF TOPICS, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH FOLLOW:

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A. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON

IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THIS WAS, FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HIS PRINCIPAL CONCERN AND HE ASKED SEVERAL QUESTIONS RELATING TO WHAT THE POLICY OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TOWARD SOUTHEAST ASIA MIGHT BE. TO EACH OF HIS QUESTIONS THE ADMIRAL REPLIED THAT IT WAS PREMATURE TO SPECULATE ABOUT THE POLICIES OF THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION. THE FOREIGN MINISTER

COMMENTED THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT WAS WORRIED OVER THE IMPRESSION THE PRESIDENT-ELECT HAD CREATED THAT HE FAVORED A RAPID WITHDRAWAL OF US FORCES FROM KOREA.

B. RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST STATES OF FRENCH INDOCHINA
THE ADMIRAL INQUIRED ABOUT THAILAND'S POLICY VIS-A-VIS LAOS, VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. IN RESPONSE UPADIT OBSERVED THAT HANOI, VIENTIANE AND PHNOM PENH CONTINUED TO DEMONSTRATE HOSTILITY TOWARD THAILAND. DESPITE THIS THAILAND WAS STILL COMMITTED TO A POLICY OF NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH ITS COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. IN TIME UPADIT HOPED THAT THE LAO, VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIANS WOULD SEE THE WISDOM OF WORKING OUT A MODUS VIVENDI. HE FEELS THAT ONE ELEMENT WORKING IN FAVOR OF SUCH A RESULT WAS VIETNAM'S NEED TO BRING ABOUT THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH. HE FELT THAT THIS MIGHT DETER IT FROM FOREIGN ENTERPRISES.

C. EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE TO THAI INSURGENTS
UPADIT, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, STATED FLATLY THAT THAI INSURGENTS ARE RECEIVING EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE FROM LAOS, VIETNAM AND ALSO RED CHINA. POSITIVE PROOF, HE ADMITTED, IS DIFFICULT TO COME BY BUT THE VARIETY OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION WHICH THE RTG HAS CAPTURED FROM THE INSURGENTS WOULD TEND TO SUBSTANTIATE SUCH ASSISTANCE.

D. US ASSISTANCE TO A THREATENED THAILAND
UPADIT ASKED WHAT THE US REACTION MIGHT BE IF THAILAND WERE ATTACKED BY ITS COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. (ON THE BASIS OF HIS SERVICE AS AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON HE IS OBVIOUSLY SKEPTICAL THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD COME TO THAILAND'S AID IF SHE WERE A VICTIM OF AGGRESSION.) BOTH ADMIRAL WEISNER AND THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC GENERALLY CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL

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IT UNLIKELY THAT THAILAND WOULD BE AN OBJECT OF OVERT AGGRESSION LAUNCHED FROM LAOS, THUS IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT WHAT THE PUBLIC REACTION IN THE UNITED STATES MIGHT BE IF SUCH AN EVENTUALITY AROSE. UPADIT THEREUPON MODIFIED HIS QUESTION AND ASKED WHETHER AMERICAN ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE FORTHCOMING, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, IF THE INSURGENCY WERE TO PICK UP STEAM BECAUSE OF INCREASED SUPPORT FROM BANGKOK'S COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. UPADIT WAS ASKED WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS SOLID EVIDENCE OF A MARKED INCREASE IN THE INSURGENCY AND HE REPLIED IT WAS NOT AS YET POSSIBLE TO SAY WITH ASSURANCE. THE RECENT INCREASE IN ACTIVITY MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BE NO MORE THAN A SOMEWHAT LARGER THAN NORMAL FLURRY THAT USUALLY ACCOMPANIED THE ADVENT OF THE DRY SEASON. NEVERTHELESS, THE RTG WAS HOWEVER QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPATE OF RECENT INCIDENTS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO A JOINT EFFORT IN THE SOUTH WITH THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT.

E. ASEAN
IN RESPONSE TO ADMIRAL WEISNER'S QUESTION, UPADIT ACKNOWLEDGED

THAT THAILAND PLACED GREAT SIGNIFICANCE ON ASEAN. HE NOTED THERE WAS A VACUUM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA CREATED BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF US GOVERNMENT FORCES OVER THE LAST YEAR. IT WAS HOPED THAT ASEAN COULD FILL THIS VACUUM AND THAT A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY COULD BE CREATED IN THE REGION. HE EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT THE USG SEEMED SYMPATHETIC TO ASEAN.

F. SEATO PHASE-OUT

UPADIT NOTED THAT THE SOUTHEAST ASIA TREATY ORGANIZATION WOULD GO OUT OF BUSINESS ON JUNE 30 AND ASKED WHETHER OR NOT THE MANILA PACT REMAINED IN FORCE. BOTH ADMIRAL WEISNER AND THE AMBASSADOR ASSURED UPADIT THAT DESPITE THE PHASE OUT OF SEATO THE MANILA PACT WAS STILL REGARDED AS BEING IN FORCE.

G. PHILIPPINE BASE TALKS

UPADIT ASKED ADMIRAL WEISNER ABOUT THE US BASE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT AND WHETHER THE ADMIRAL FELT THEY WOULD BE SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE ADMIRAL EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE NEGOTIATION WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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BE BROUGHT TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION AND UPADIT INDICATED THAT THIS WAS MUCH DESIRED BY THE THAI GOVERNMENT.

3. COMMENT: IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM THE TENOR OF UPADIT'S REMARKS THAT THE RTG IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE POLICIES WHICH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS LIKELY TO PURSUE TOWARD SOUTHEAST ASIA. THAILAND, LIKE THE OTHER ASEAN NATIONS IS LOOKING FOR SOME FIRM INDICATION THAT SOUTHEAST ASIA REMAINS IMPORTANT TO THE UNITED STATES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO00669
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770010-0015
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770165/aaaacegc.tel
Line Count: 149
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 76e3b6db-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3629042
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CINCPAC'S MEETING WITH THAI FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT PACHARIYANKUN
TAGS: PFOR, TH, US, (UPADIT PACHARIYANKUN), (WEISNER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/76e3b6db-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009